

COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES

As soon as I entered the yard, I could tell what was happening. The sweet smell of peaches and scorched sugar told me Mother was canning.

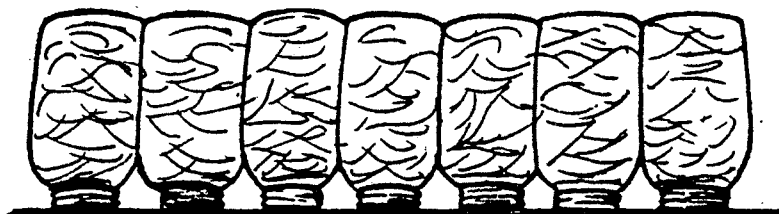
Which job would fall to me? Would I haul out the peelings and stones to the garbage can? Would I wash, peel, and stone the fuzzy fruit? Would I retrieve empty jars clouded with a dusty film from the basement shelves? Would I scrub, rinse, and stack the jars and lids so they could be sterilized? Or would I measure sugar and water for the next batch of fruit to be bottled?

One thing sure, I would not be filling the sterilized jars. That was strictly grown-up's work!

I knew I would be in a steam bath with intense heat. Rising vapor from the open pots of bubbling fruit and steaming pans of bottles, lids, and rings made the kitchen an inferno.

I soon forgot the heat as I became a part of the frantic pace of the canning routine: wash, peel, stone, measure, stir, boil, scrub, rinse, sterilize, bottle, flip, swirl, twist, tighten, and turn! A canning rhythm was established right down to the last bottle.

When Dad walked in the kitchen, he started to smile and began counting the jars, 199, 200, 201 upside-down bottles of luscious peaches. And I had been a part of all of this!



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1. This story is about:
 - (a) washing jars
 - (b) counting jars
 - (c) canning peaches
 - (d) throwing away stones
2. Containers for the fruit were found:
 - (a) on the counter
 - (b) in the cupboard
 - (c) in the basement
 - (d) in the garage
3. The fruit was prepared with a:
 - (a) salty solution
 - (b) tenderizer
 - (c) preservative
 - (d) sweet syrup
4. The writer did not fill the jars because she was:
 - (a) too short
 - (b) too clumsy
 - (c) too young
 - (d) too tall
5. Put in canning order:
 - (a) boil
 - (b) bottle
 - (c) peel
 - (d) wash
6. Scorched means:
 - (a) hot
 - (b) burnt
 - (c) sweet
 - (d) melted
7. The feeling of the writer toward the finished product was one of:
 - (a) anxiety
 - (b) pride
 - (c) distaste
 - (d) anger
8. From the story, peach canning can be:
 - (a) absorbing
 - (b) refreshing
 - (c) trifling
 - (d) relaxing